

Submitter: Hilary Nichols

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1120

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hilary Nichols, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 1120. I was honored to participate in the healthcare-specific workgroup of the Governor's Gender-Informed Practices at Coffee Creek Advisory (GIPA) process, where I contributed my expertise in community organizing and advocacy for people who are currently and formerly incarcerated. My work has focused on the profound health impacts of incarceration, and I deeply understand the urgent need for systemic change at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

One of the greatest strengths of the GIPA workgroups was the collective expertise involved. Medical professionals, reentry specialists, and individuals with direct lived experience—particularly those who were incarcerated at Coffee Creek—came together to develop concrete, informed, and practical solutions. Over the course of our work, we crafted a well-researched and realistic set of actions that could transform Coffee Creek into a more humane facility—one that truly implements gender-informed and trauma-informed practices.

However, my concern at the conclusion of this process was that what we had created was a set of recommendations—and by their nature, recommendations can simply be ignored. When we talk about something as critical as basic human rights and the dignity of incarcerated people, these cannot remain optional suggestions.

We cannot allow these carefully developed solutions to become just another list of ideas that may or may not be acted upon. SB 1120 is essential because it codifies these recommendations into law, making them a directive, not a choice. It establishes a clear standard of care and accountability for the Oregon Department of Corrections to uphold.

I recognize that some of the changes outlined in SB 1120 may take time, resources, and investment. But if we fail to set these standards now, we will never get there. The legislature is the most powerful body to hold DOC accountable for implementing these essential reforms. Without legislative action, the urgent and informed work of the GIPA workgroups risks being set aside, and the opportunity to improve the lives of those incarcerated at Coffee Creek could be lost.

By passing SB 1120, Oregon has the chance to affirm that human dignity does not end at prison walls. This bill is a step toward ensuring that Coffee Creek operates

with the humanity, equity, and care that every person deserves.

I urge you to support SB 1120 and take action to make these critical reforms a reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hilary Nichols
Clinic Based Community Organizer